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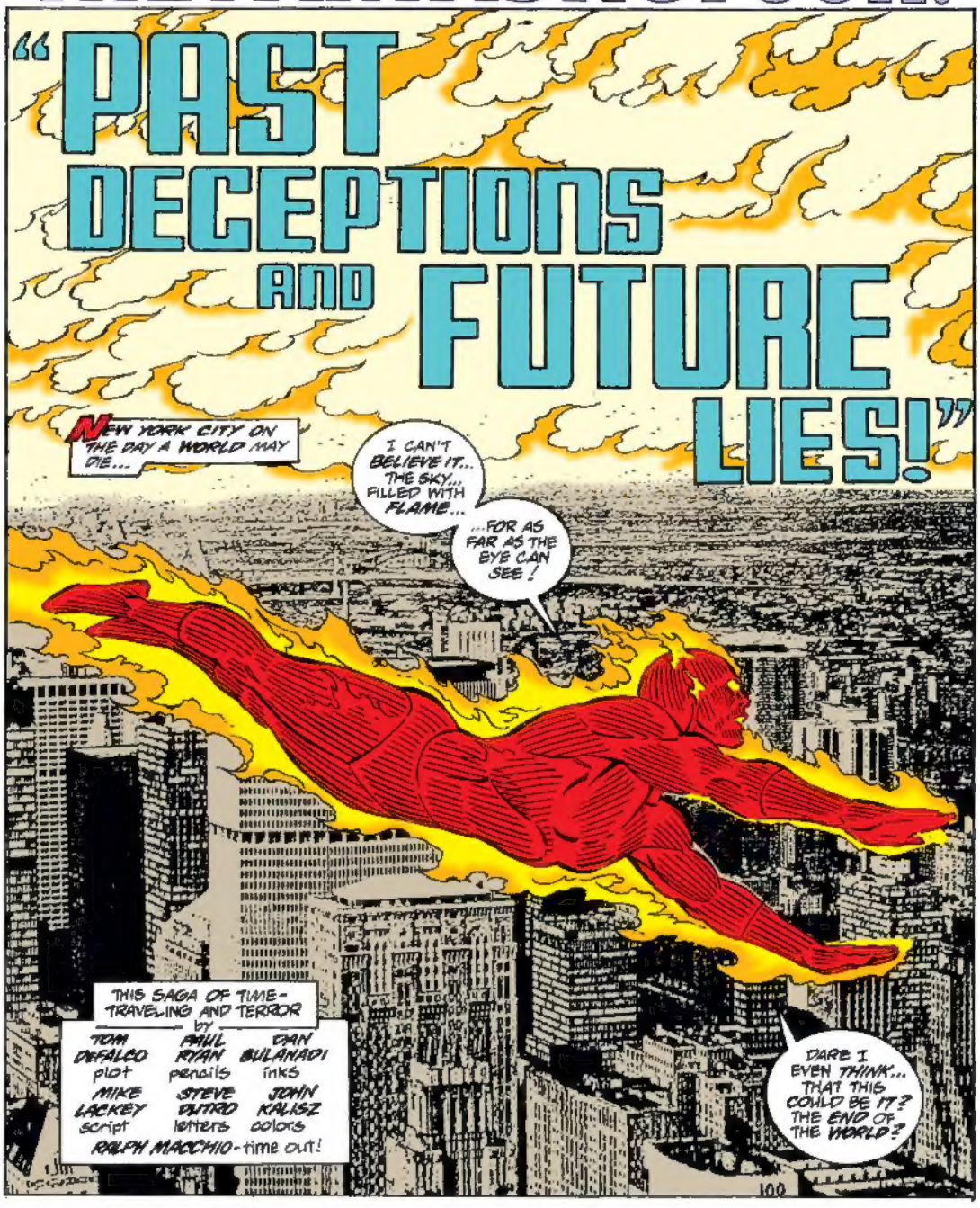
Fantastic Four
THE COMING OF GALACTUS!
RYAN AFTER KIRBY VIA MACCHIO '94

BEN GRIMM, THE THING! SUE RICHARDS, INVISIBLE WOMAN! JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH! TRANSFORMED BY AN ACCIDENT IN OUTER SPACE INTO SOMETHING MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN, THEY VOWED TO USE THEIR AWESOME POWERS TO HELP MANKIND CHART THE UNKNOWN. STAN LEE PRESENTS. . .

THE FANTASTIC FOUR!


"PAST DECEPTIONS AND FUTURE LIES!"
NEW YORK CITY ON THE DAY A WORLD MAY DIE...
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... THE SKY... FILLED WITH FLAME...
...FOR AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE!
DARE I EVEN THINK... THAT THIS COULD BE IT? THE END OF THE WORLD?
THIS SAGA OF TIME-TRAVELING AND TERROR
by
TOM DEFALCO plot
PAUL RYAN pencils
DAN BULANADI inks
MIKE LACKEY script
STEVE DUTRO letters
JOHN KALISZ colors
RALPH MACCHIO-time out!
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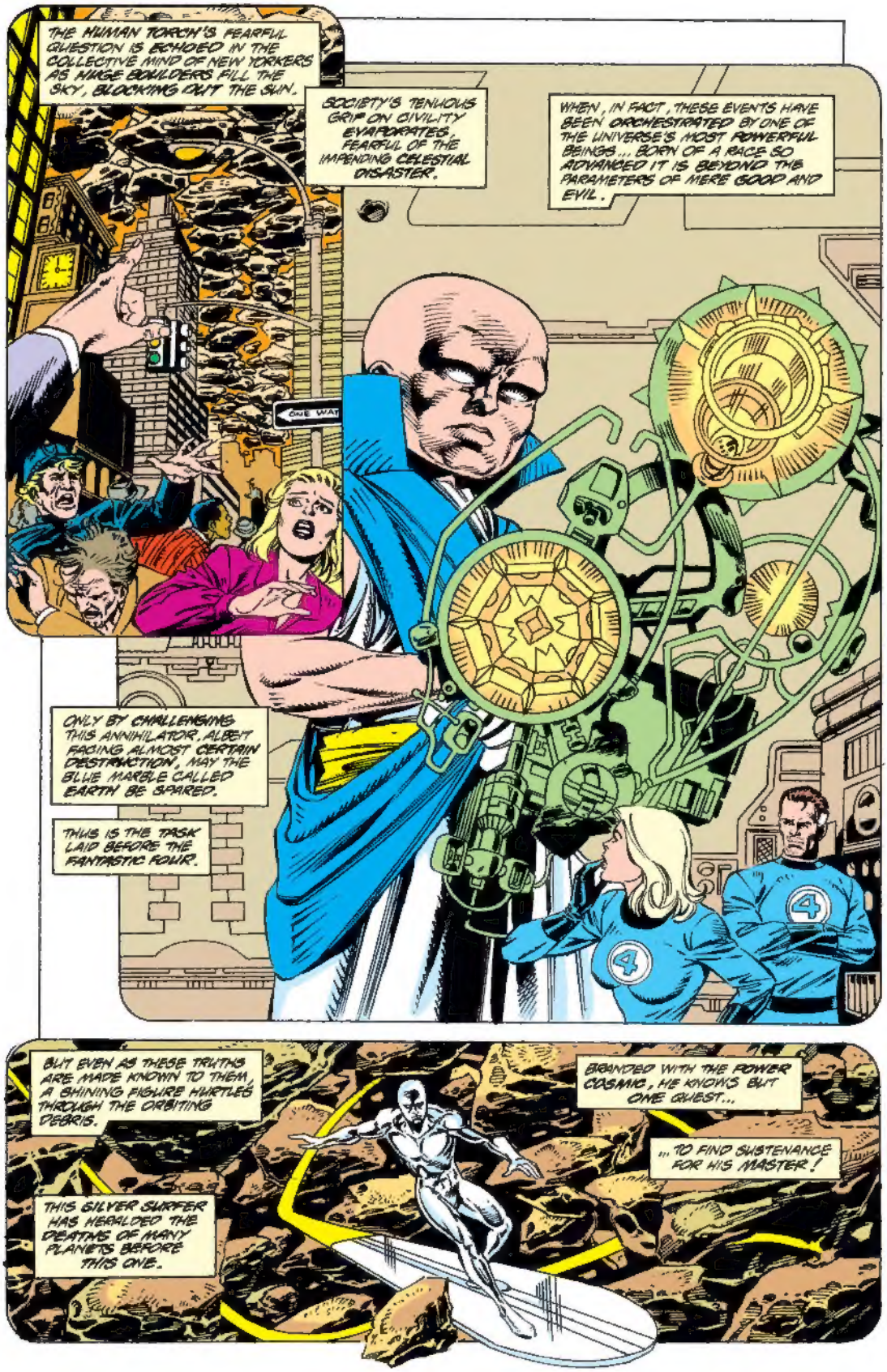
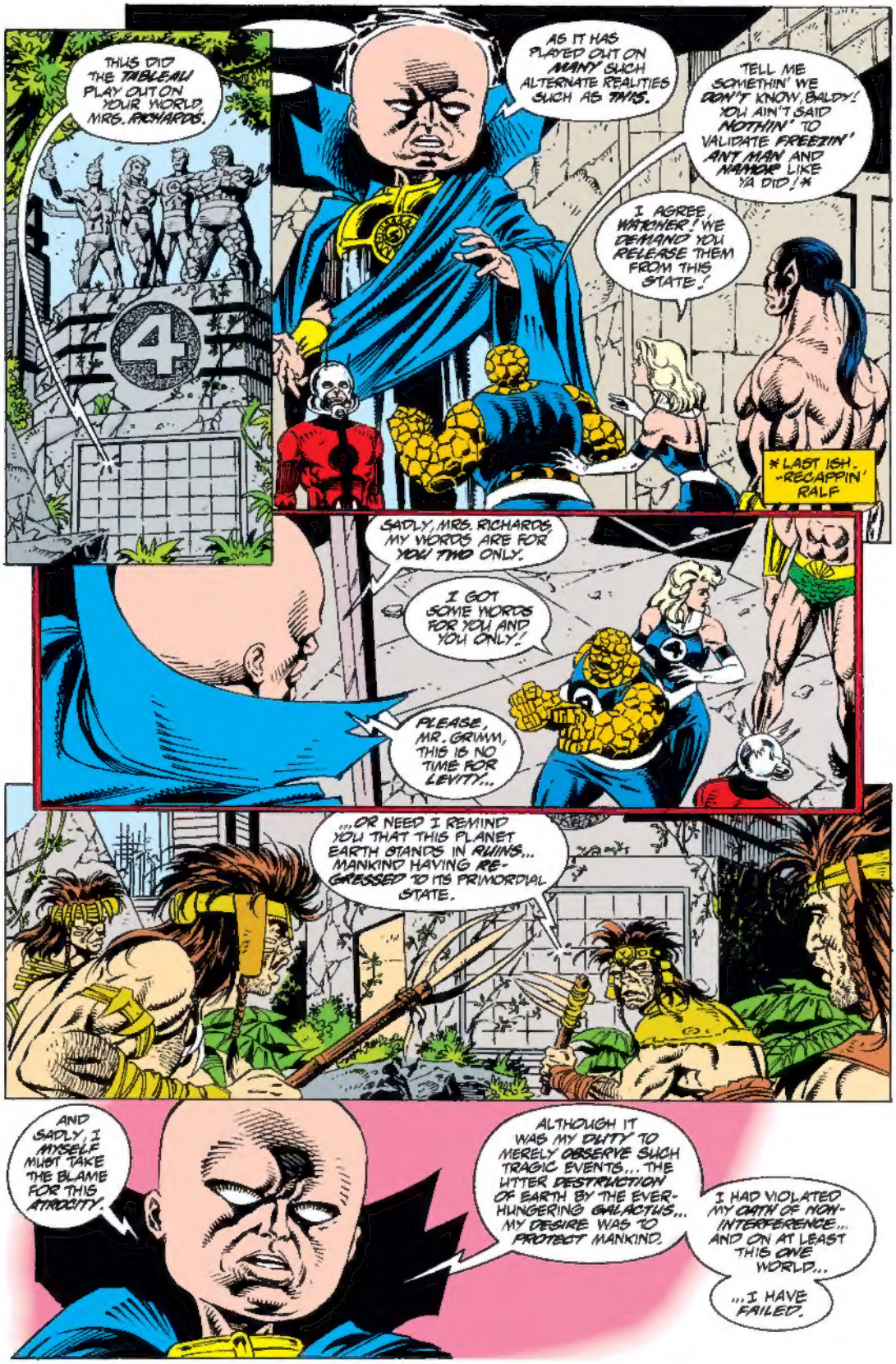
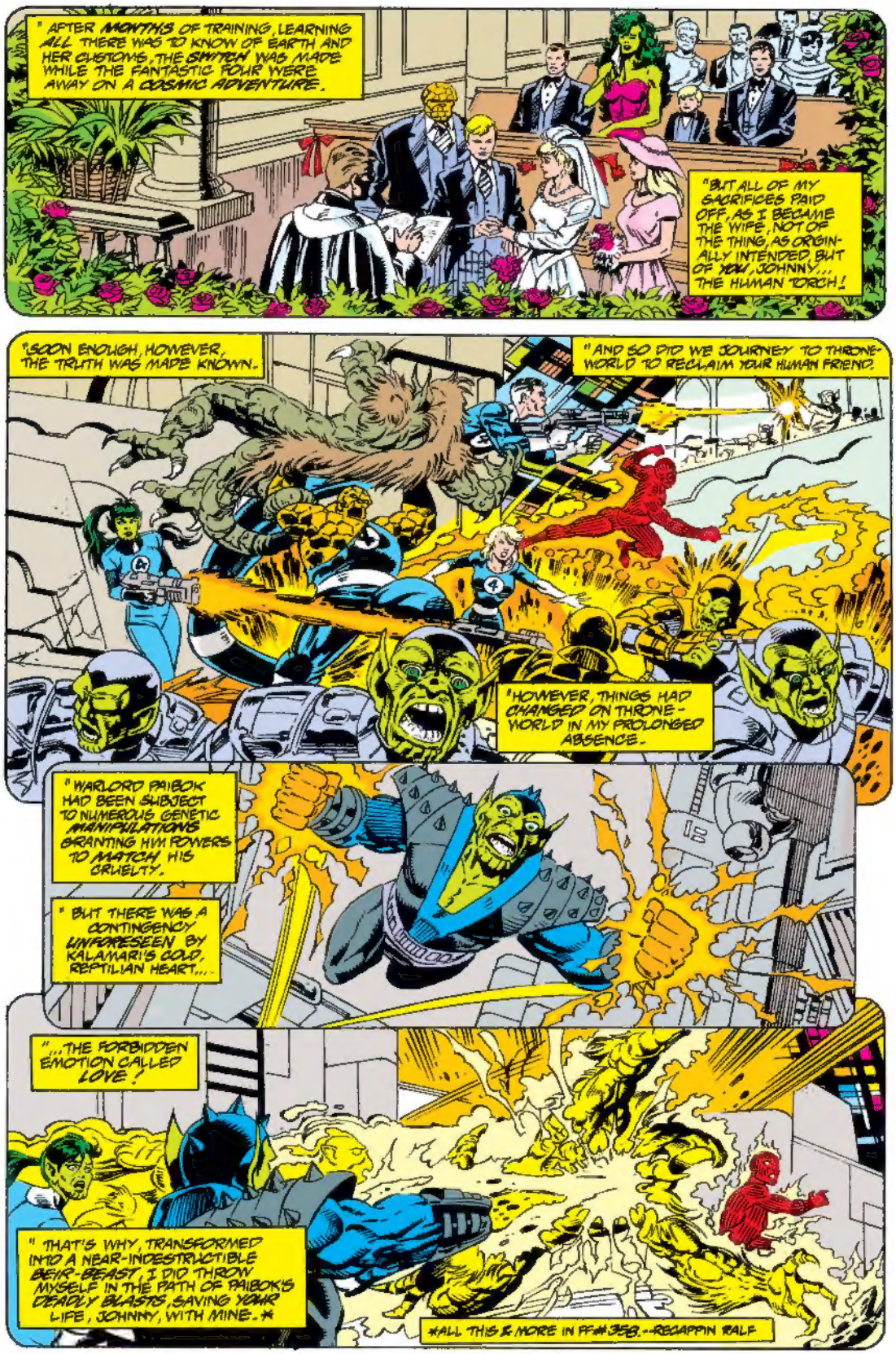
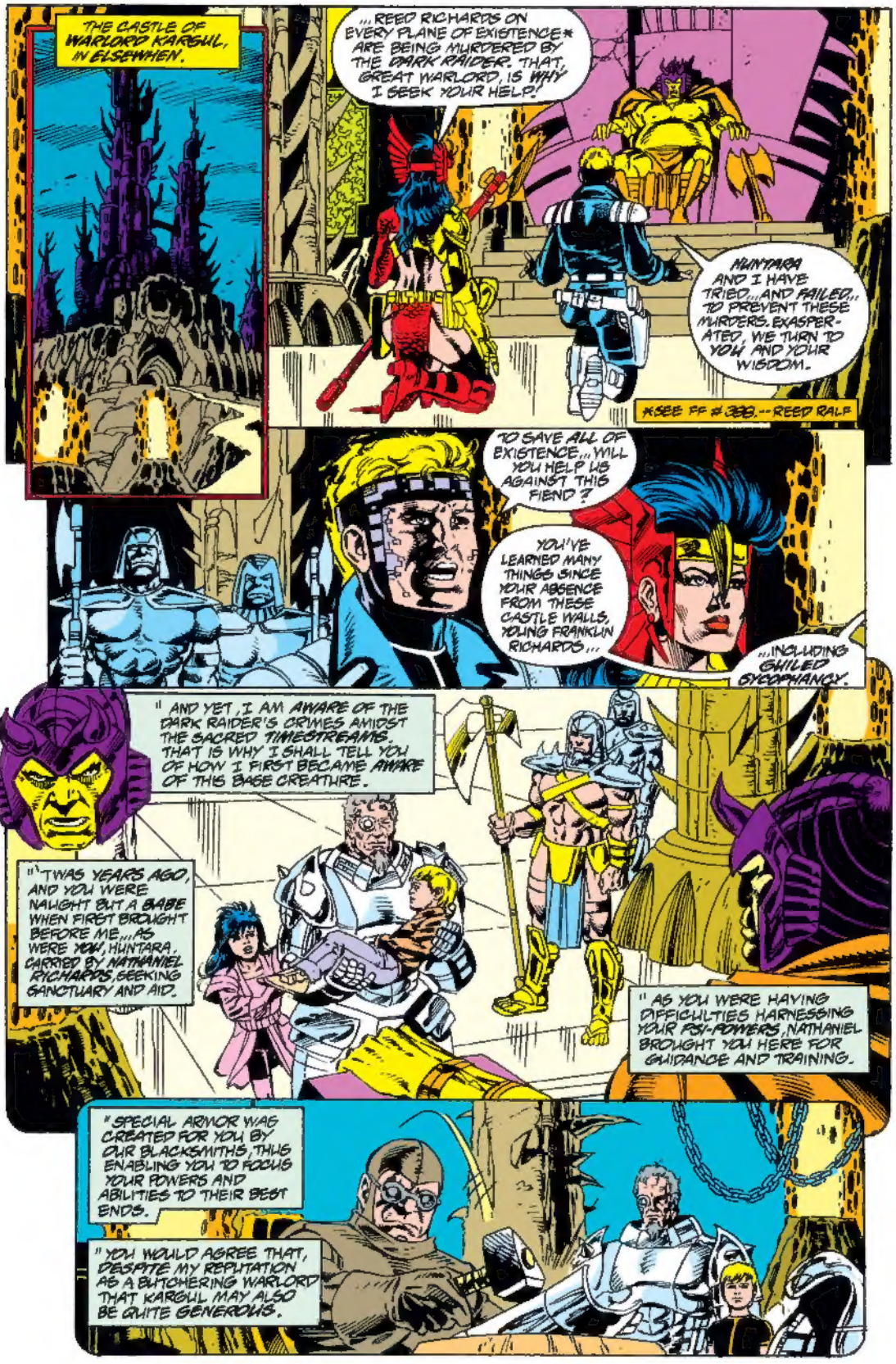

THE HUMAN TORCH'S FEARFUL QUESTION IS ECHOED IN THE COLLECTIVE MIND OF NEW YORKERS AS HUGE BOULDERS FILL THE SKY, BLOCKING OUT THE SUN.
SOCIETY'S TENUOUS GRIP ON CIVILITY EVAPORATES, FEARFUL OF THE IMPENDING CELESTIAL DISASTER.
WHEN, IN FACT, THESE EVENTS HAVE BEEN ORCHESTRATED BY ONE OF THE UNIVERSE'S MOST POWERFUL BEINGS... BORN OF A RACE SO ADVANCED IT IS BEYOND THE PARAMETERS OF MERE GOOD AND EVIL.
ONLY BY CHALLENGING THIS ANNIHILATOR, ALBEIT FACING ALMOST CERTAIN DESTRUCTION, MAY THE BLUE MARBLE CALLED EARTH BE SPARED.
THUS IS THE TASK LAID BEFORE THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
BUT EVEN AS THESE TRUTHS ARE MADE KNOWN TO THEM, A SHINING FIGURE HURTLES THROUGH THE ORBITING DEBRIS.
BRANDED WITH THE POWER COSMIC, HE KNOWS BUT ONE QUEST...
...TO FIND SUSTENANCE FOR HIS MASTER!
THIS SILVER SURFER HAS HERALDED THE DEATHS OF MANY PLANETS BEFORE THIS ONE.


THUS DID THE TABLEAU PLAY OUT ON YOUR WORLD, MRS. RICHARDS.
AS IT HAS PLAYED OUT ON MANY SUCH ALTERNATE REALITIES SUCH AS THIS.
TELL ME SOMETHIN' WE DON'T KNOW, BALDY! YOU AIN'T SAID NOTHIN' TO VALIDATE FREEZIN' ANT MAN AND MANNOR LIKE YA DID!*
I AGREE, WATCHER! WE DEMAND YOU RELEASE THEM FROM THIS STATE!
* LAST ISH. -RECAPPIN' RALF
SADLY, MRS. RICHARDS, MY WORDS ARE FOR YOU TWO ONLY.
I GOT SOME WORDS FOR YOU AND YOU ONLY!
PLEASE, MR. GRIMM, THIS IS NO TIME FOR LEVITY...
...OR NEED I REMIND YOU THAT THIS PLANET EARTH STANDS IN RUINS... MANKIND HAVING RE-GRESSED TO ITS PRIMORDIAL STATE.
AND SADLY, I MYSELF MUST TAKE THE BLAME FOR THIS ATROCITY.
ALTHOUGH IT WAS MY DUTY TO MERELY OBSERVE SUCH TRAGIC EVENTS... THE UTTER DESTRUCTION OF EARTH BY THE EVER-HUNGERING GALACTUS... MY DESIRE WAS TO PROTECT MANKIND.
I HAD VIOLATED MY OATH OF NON-INTERFERENCE... AND ON AT LEAST THIS ONE WORLD...
...I HAVE FAILED.

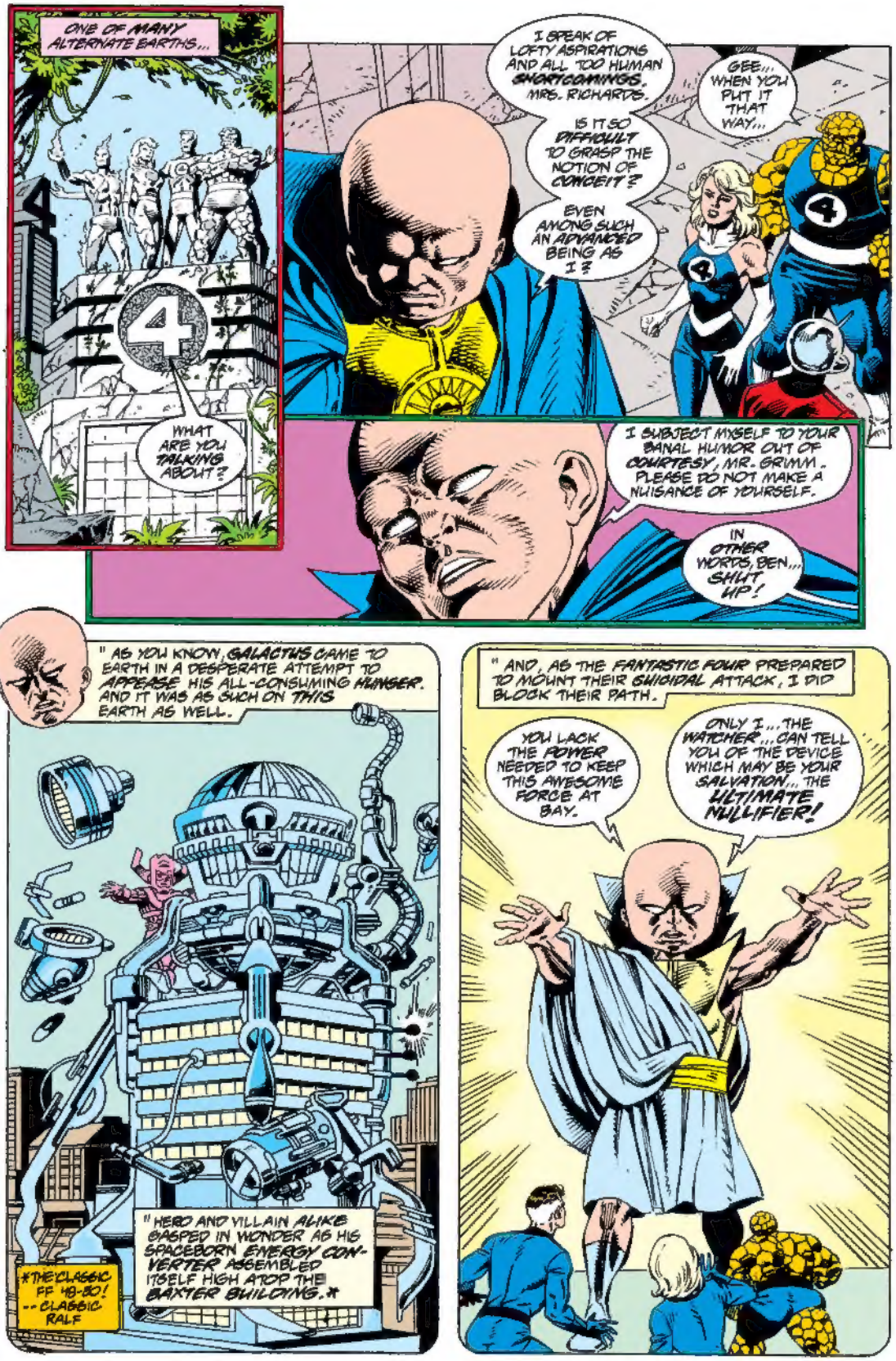
TODAY.
SHUT UP... JUST SHUT UP!
AS IF I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH ON MY MIND... REED DEAD... SUE OUT OF HER MIND WITH GRIEF AND DENIAL... MY WIFE, THE SKRULL, GIVING BIRTH TO A BLASTED EGG...
...YOUR LASER-FIST POWERS JUST AREN'T A CONCERN!
PERHAPS I SHOULD COME BACK AT A BETTER TIME...
YOU'VE NO EXCUSE TO BE RUDE TO MR. SUAREZ, JOHNNY. HE CAME TO US FOR HELP.
THAT'S RIGHT. I WAS EXPOSED TO THIS... "EGG"... AND SINCE THEN THIS BIZARRE POWER HAS MANIFESTED ITSELF IN ME!*
*LAST ISH.--EL RALF-O
I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW. I JUST FOUND OUT I'M NOT A FATHER. THAT'S THE ONLY THING ON MY MIND.
I WOULD'VE TOLD YOU, JOHNNY. I WAS SIMPLY WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME.
AFTER MONTHS OF BITTERNESS, YOU AND I HAD FINALLY FOUND SOME WARMTH. WAS IT SO WRONG TO CRAVE THAT?
NO... REALLY. I CAN COME BACK ANY-TIME...
NO, RAFE SUAREZ. SINCE YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH THE EGG, YOU HAVE NOW BECOME A PLAYER IN THIS MORBID DRAMA. IT BEGAN MANY MONTHS AGO, BACK ON THRONEWORLD...
...AS THE GREAT GENERAL KALAMARI HIMSELF PLOTTED THE DOWNFALL OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR WITH THE GREAT WARRIOR PAIBOK.
AN EVIL SCHEME COMBINING OUR SHAPESHIFTING ABILITIES, SCHEMING AND INTRIGUE, AND MANIPULATING THE FRAILTIES OF THE HUMAN HEART.
WE MUST CONCEIVE OF A PLAN THAT WILL BRING ABOUT THE UTTER HUMILIATING DEFEAT OF THE ACCURSED FANTASTIC FOUR!
AND I, PAIBOK, MOST EXALTED GENERAL HAVE IMAGINED JUST SUCH A PLAN.
4
THE HUMAN KNOWN AS ALICIA MASTERS HAS STOLEN THE HEART OF BENJAMIN GRIMM... ALSO KNOWN AS THE THING. SHE SHALL BE OUR INSTRUMENT OF DESTRUCTION!
YOU MUST STUDY EVERY DETAIL... EVERY NUANCE... OF YOUR NEW FACE!


" AFTER MONTHS OF TRAINING, LEARNING ALL THERE WAS TO KNOW OF EARTH AND HER CUSTOMS, THE SWITCH WAS MADE WHILE THE FANTASTIC FOUR WERE AWAY ON A COSMIC ADVENTURE.
"BUT ALL OF MY SACRIFICES PAID OFF, AS I BECAME THE WIFE, NOT OF THE THING, AS ORIGINALLY INTENDED BUT OF YOU, JOHNNY... THE HUMAN TORCH!
"SOON ENOUGH, HOWEVER, THE TRUTH WAS MADE KNOWN.
"AND SO DID WE JOURNEY TO THRONE-WORLD TO RECLAIM YOUR HUMAN FRIEND.
"HOWEVER, THINGS HAD CHANGED ON THRONE-WORLD IN MY PROLONGED ABSENCE.
"WARLORD PAIBOK HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO NUMEROUS GENETIC MANIPULATIONS GRANTING HIM POWERS TO MATCH HIS CRUELTY.
" BUT THERE WAS A CONTINGENCY UNFORESEEN BY KALAMARI'S COLD, REPTILIAN HEART...
"...THE FORBIDDEN EMOTION CALLED LOVE!
" THAT'S WHY, TRANSFORMED INTO A NEAR-INDESTRUCTIBLE BEAR-BEAST, I DID THROW MYSELF IN THE PATH OF PAIBOK'S DEADLY BLASTS, SAVING YOUR LIFE, JOHNNY, WITH MINE.*
*ALL THIS & MORE IN FF#358.--RECAPPIN RALF

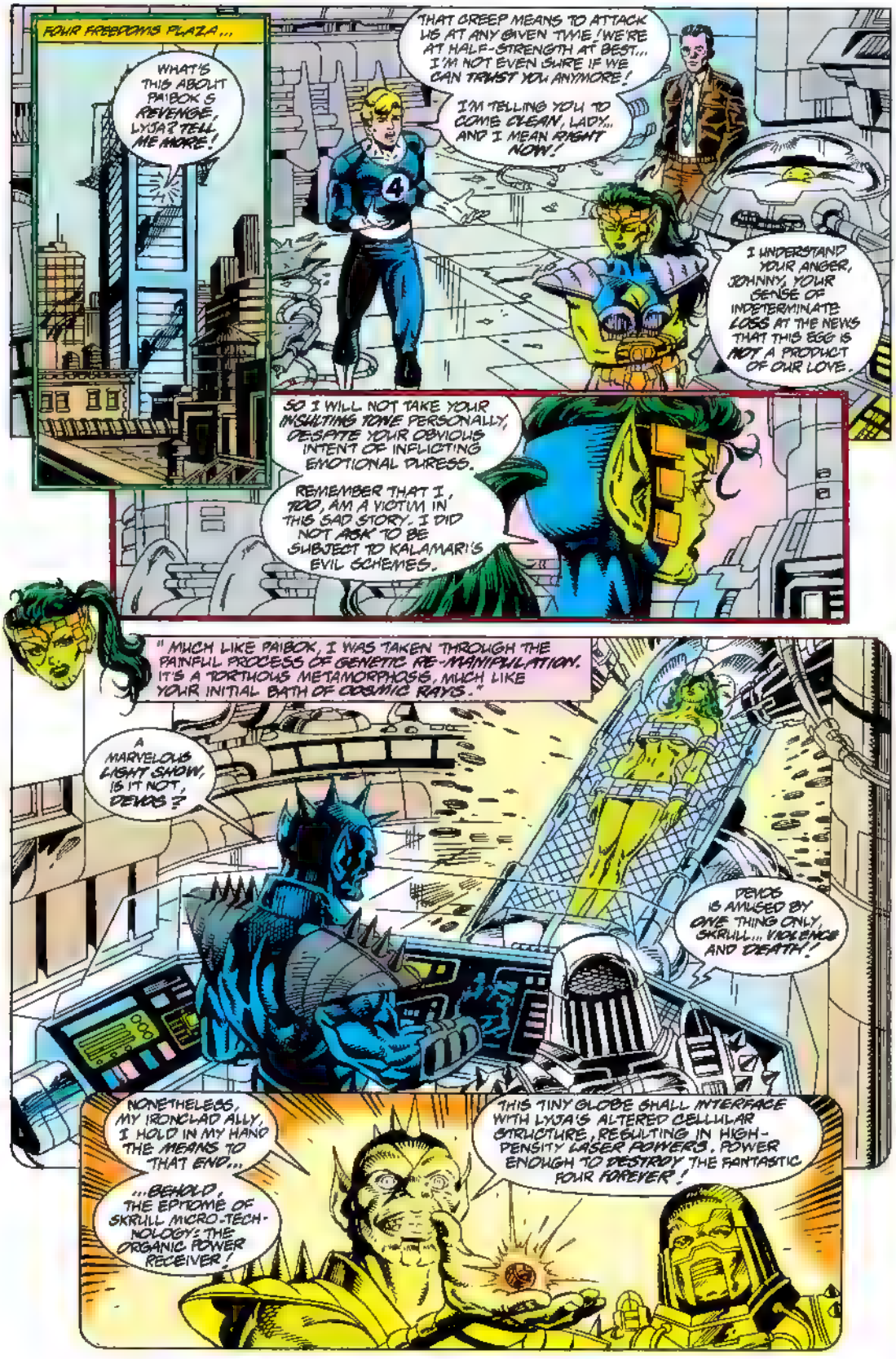
"THAT WAS THE MOMENT YOU REALIZED, JOHNNY, THAT YOU INDEED HAD FEELINGS OF LOVE FOR ME SEPARATE FROM WHAT YOU FELT FOR ALICIA.
"BUT OUR MOMENT OF TRANQUILITY WAS SHORT-LIVED...
"...AS REACTORS IN OUR SKRULL HEADQUARTERS REACHED CRITICAL MASS, DUE TO TAMPERING BY MR. FANTASTIC, YOU WERE FORCED TO LEAVE MY SIDE.
"BUT PAIBOK, FILLED WITH FURY, VOWED REVENGE.
"AS YOU KNOW, PAIBOK AND I WERE ONCE BETROTHED ON THRONEWORLD, BUT OUR ROMANCE SOURED. I OFTEN WONDERED IF MY EXTENDED MISSION ON EARTH WAS PUNISHMENT FOR THAT.
"NONETHELESS, HE WAS MOVED TO SPARE ME. THOUGH WHETHER IT WAS DUE TO GUILT OR THE VESTIGES OF OUR ONCE-BURNING PASSION, NONE BUT HE COULD SAY.
"BUT SAVE ME HE DID, WITH BUT MOMENTS TO SPARE.
"UNFORTUNATELY, SAVING THRONE-WORLD WAS BEYOND EVEN HIS INCREDIBLE MEANS."


THE CASTLE OF WARLORD KARGUL, IN ELSEWHEN.
...REED RICHARDS ON EVERY PLANE OF EXISTENCE* ARE BEING MURDERED BY THE DARK RAIDER. THAT, GREAT WARLORD, IS WHY I SEEK YOUR HELP!
HUNTARA AND I HAVE TRIED...AND FAILED... TO PREVENT THESE MURDERS. EXASPERATED, WE TURN TO YOU AND YOUR WISDOM.
*SEE FF #388.--REED RALF
TO SAVE ALL OF EXISTENCE...WILL YOU HELP US AGAINST THIS FIEND?
YOU'VE LEARNED MANY THINGS SINCE YOUR ABSENCE FROM THESE CASTLE WALLS, YOUNG FRANKLIN RICHARDS...
...INCLUDING SHILED SYCOPHANCY.
"AND YET, I AM AWARE OF THE DARK RAIDER'S CRIMES AMIDST THE SACRED TIMESTREAMS. THAT IS WHY I SHALL TELL YOU OF HOW I FIRST BECAME AWARE OF THIS BASE CREATURE.
"'TWAS YEARS AGO, AND YOU WERE NAUGHT BUT A BABE WHEN FIRST BROUGHT BEFORE ME...AS WERE YOU, HUNTARA, CARRIED BY NATHANIEL RICHARDS, SEEKING SANCTUARY AND AID.
"AS YOU WERE HAVING DIFFICULTIES HARNESSING YOUR PSY-POWERS, NATHANIEL BROUGHT YOU HERE FOR GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.
"SPECIAL ARMOR WAS CREATED FOR YOU BY OUR BLACKSMITHS, THUS ENABLING YOU TO FOCUS YOUR POWERS AND ABILITIES TO THEIR BEST ENDS.
"YOU WOULD AGREE THAT, DESPITE MY REPUTATION AS A BUTCHERING WARLORD THAT KARGUL MAY ALSO BE QUITE GENEROUS.

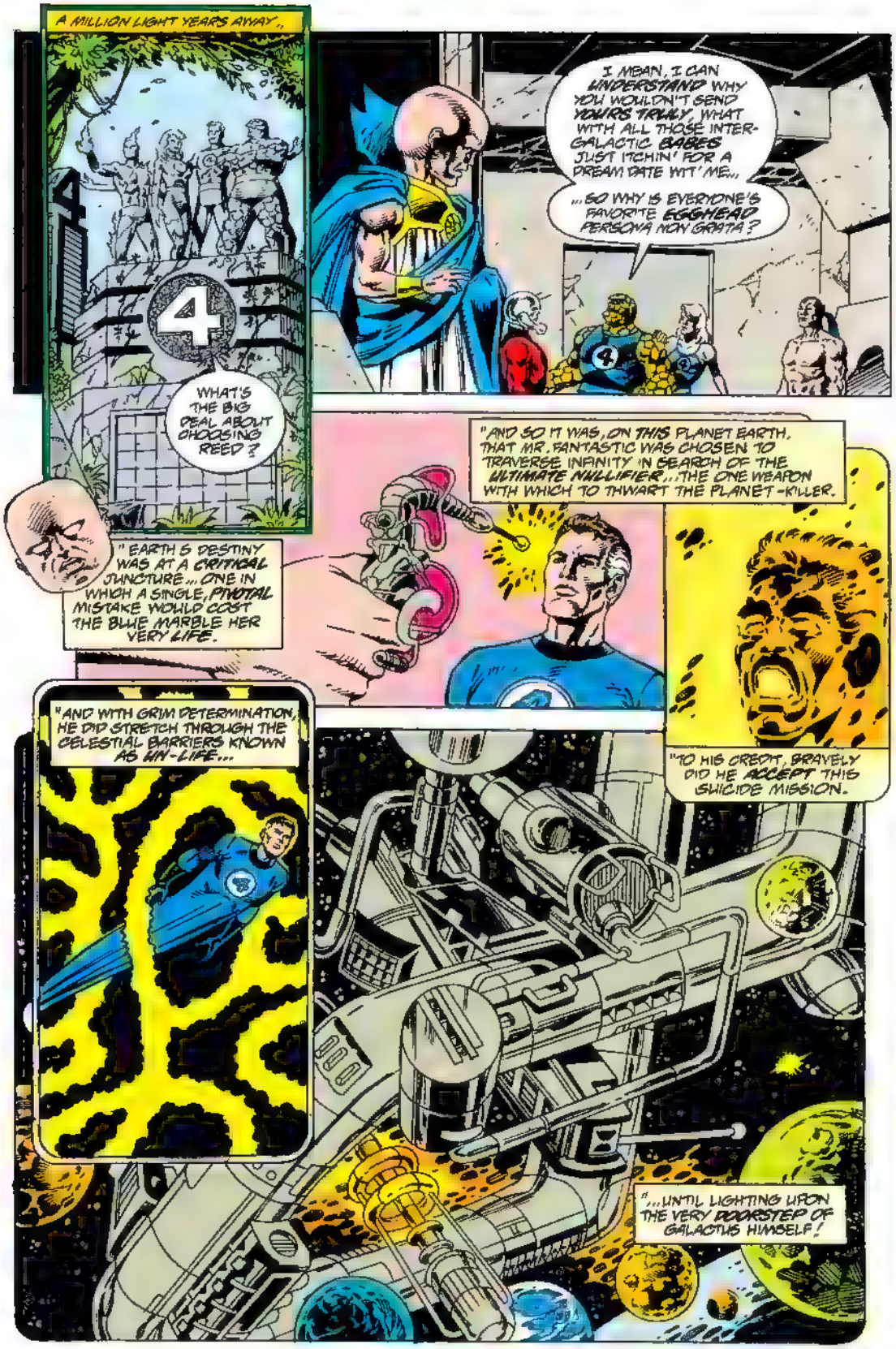
" AND WHILE YOU WERE INSTRUCTED IN THE PSI-ARTS, SO WAS HUNTARA INDOCTRINATED IN THE WAYS OF WAR, TRAINED BY THE MOST FEARSOME GLADIATORS AND CUTTHROATS!
"YEARS PASSED.
" AND DURING THAT TIME DID RICHARDS INGRATIATE HIMSELF UPON ME AND MY STAFF, EVENTUALLY GAINING PRIVILEGED ACCESS TO MY WARLORD'S VIEWING POOL.
" AND WHILE YOU CHILDREN WERE TRAINING, NATHANIEL EMBARKED UPON HIS OWN CURRICULUM...STUDYING THE SACRED TIMESTREAMS!
" SHORTLY THEREAFTER WAS WHEN I CALLED YOU BEFORE ME, INFORMING YOU OF NATHAN'S SURREPTITIOUS FLIGHT FROM THIS SAFE HAVEN, DUMPING UPON YOUR YOUTHFUL SHOULDERS THE BURDEN OF BECOMING GUARDIANS OF THE SACRED TIMESTREAM!"
WHICH IS WHAT WE HAVE DONE... ALL THIS TIME.
AND NOBLY HAVE YOU PERFORMED THIS DUTY. AND THUS IT IS WITH A HEAVY HEART THAT I INFORM YOU THAT, WHILE A MOST PERIPHERAL ANNOYANCE IS THE DARK RAIDER, YOUR TRUE ENEMY IS...
...YOUR GRANDFATHER... NATHANIEL RICHARDS!


ONE OF MANY ALTERNATE EARTHS...
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I SPEAK OF LOFTY ASPIRATIONS AND ALL TOO HUMAN SHORTCOMINGS, MRS. RICHARDS.
IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO GRASP THE NOTION OF CONCEIT?
EVEN AMONG SUCH AN ADVANCED BEING AS I?
GEE... WHEN YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...
I SUBJECT MYSELF TO YOUR BANAL HUMOR OUT OF COURTESY, MR. GRIMM. PLEASE DO NOT MAKE A NUISANCE OF YOURSELF.
IN OTHER WORDS, BEN... SHUT UP!
" AS YOU KNOW, GALACTUS CAME TO EARTH IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO APPEASE HIS ALL-CONSUMING HUNGER. AND IT WAS AS SUCH ON THIS EARTH AS WELL.
" HERO AND VILLAIN ALIKE GASPED IN WONDER AS HIS SPACEBORN ENERGY CONVERTER ASSEMBLED ITSELF HIGH ATOP THE BAXTER BUILDING.*
*THE CLASSIC FF '48-'80! -- CLASSIC RALF
" AND, AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR PREPARED TO MOUNT THEIR SUICIDAL ATTACK, I DID BLOCK THEIR PATH.
YOU LACK THE POWER NEEDED TO KEEP THIS AWESOME FORCE AT BAY.
ONLY I... THE WATCHER... CAN TELL YOU OF THE DEVICE WHICH MAY BE YOUR SALVATION... THE ULTIMATE NULLIFIER!

" ON YOUR WORLD, AS ON THIS ONE, REED RICHARDS STEPPED FORWARD, ANXIOUS TO LEAP INTO WHATEVER VOID AWAITED HIM, IF IT MEANT SAVING HIS BELOVED HOMEWORLD.
" BUT IT WAS THE POWER OF FLIGHT THAT WAS CALLED FOR... SPEED ENOUGH TO TRAVERSE GREAT DISTANCES IN MINIMAL TIME. THAT WAS THE YOUNG HUMAN TORCH'S CALLING...
NOT TO MENTION A HEALTHY DOSE OF IGNORANCE.
GEEZ! IF YOU'DA SENT THE DOPEY HULK WE WOULDA BEEN ALL SET!
PLEASE, WATCHER. YOU'RE SPEAKING IN RIDDLES. TELL US CLEARLY... ON THIS WORLD... DID YOU SEND REED INSTEAD OF JOHNNY?
WHAT'S THAT? AN INSULT COMIN' OUTTA YOU, BALDY?
YOU'RE SAYING YOU SENT JOHNNY INSTEAD OF REED... BECAUSE HE WASN'T AS SMART?
YES.
AND A TRAGIC BLUNDER IT WAS.
AND A MISTAKE FOR WHICH I HAVE NEVER FORGIVEN MYSELF.

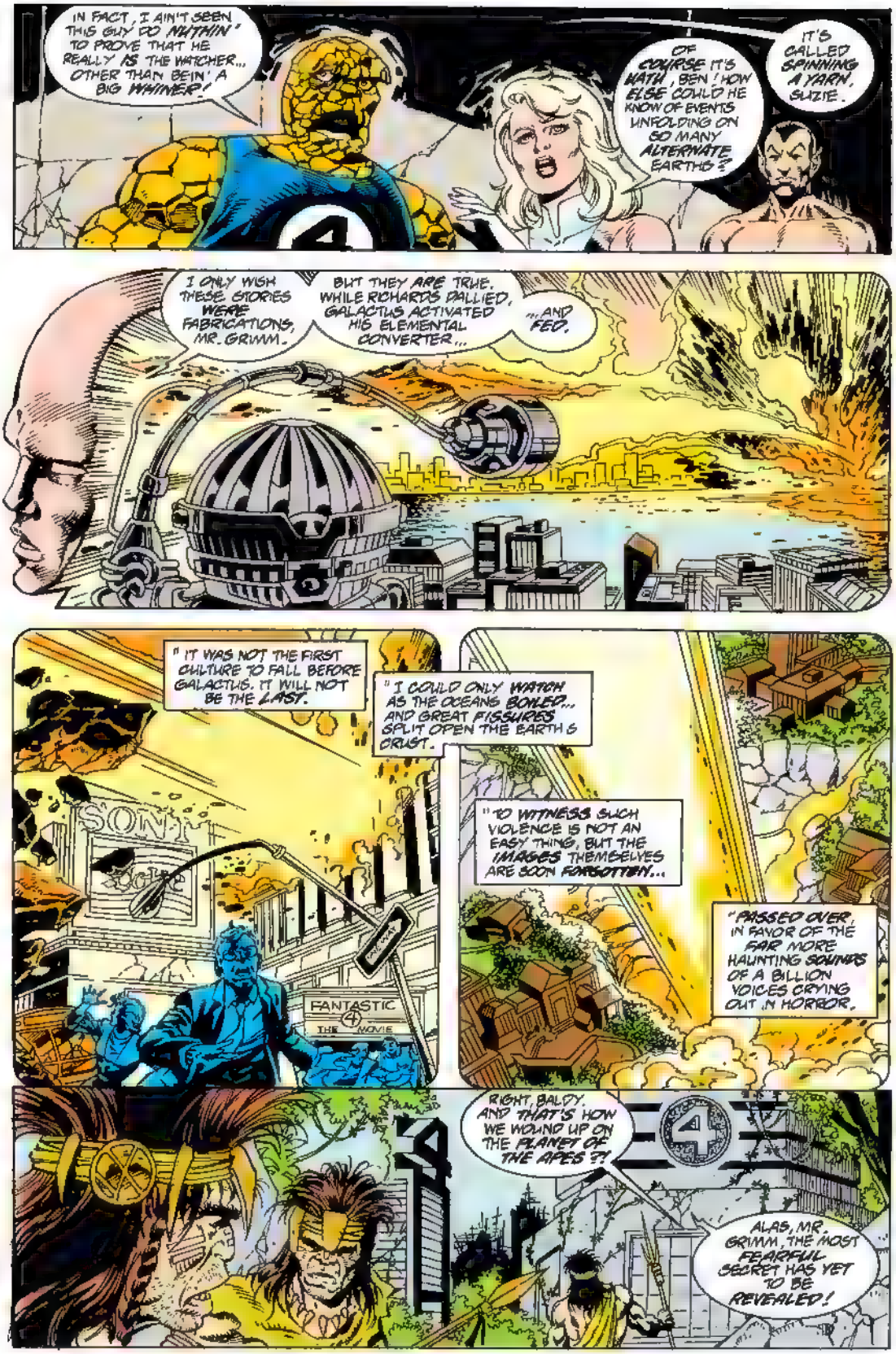

FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA...
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT PAIBOK'S REVENGE, LYJA? TELL ME MORE!
THAT CREEP MEANS TO ATTACK US AT ANY GIVEN TIME! WE'RE AT HALF-STRENGTH AT BEST... I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF WE CAN TRUST YOU ANYMORE!
I'M TELLING YOU TO COME CLEAN, LADY... AND I MEAN RIGHT NOW!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR ANGER, JOHNNY, YOUR SENSE OF INDETERMINATE LOSS AT THE NEWS THAT THIS EGG IS NOT A PRODUCT OF OUR LOVE.
SO I WILL NOT TAKE YOUR INSULTING TONE PERSONALLY, DESPITE YOUR OBVIOUS INTENT OF INFLICTING EMOTIONAL DURESS.
REMEMBER THAT I, TOO, AM A VICTIM IN THIS SAD STORY. I DID NOT ASK TO BE SUBJECT TO KALAMARI'S EVIL SCHEMES.
"MUCH LIKE PAIBOK, I WAS TAKEN THROUGH THE PAINFUL PROCESS OF GENETIC RE-MANIPULATION. IT'S A TORTUOUS METAMORPHOSIS, MUCH LIKE YOUR INITIAL BATH OF COSMIC RAYS."
A MARVELOUS LIGHT SHOW, IS IT NOT, DEVOS?
DEVOS IS AMUSED BY ONE THING ONLY, SKRULL... VIOLENCE AND DEATH!
NONETHELESS, MY IRONCLAD ALLY, I HOLD IN MY HAND THE MEANS TO THAT END...
...BEHOLD, THE EPITOME OF SKRULL MICRO-TECHNOLOGY: THE ORGANIC POWER RECEIVER!
THIS TINY GLOBE SHALL INTERFACE WITH LYJA'S ALTERED CELLULAR STRUCTURE, RESULTING IN HIGH-DENSITY LASER POWERS. POWER ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR FOREVER!

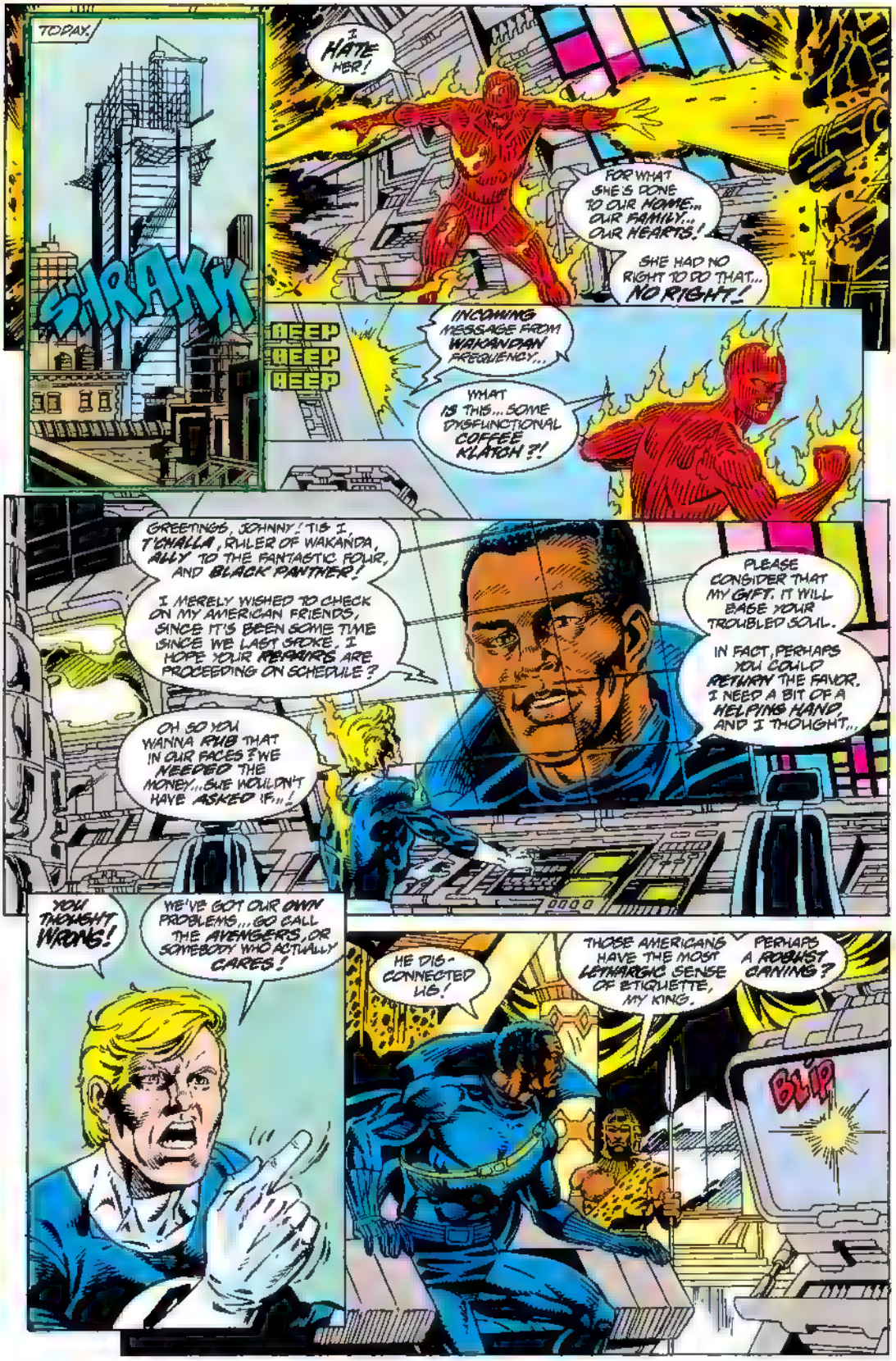
THAT EXPLAINS IT... WHY MY BODY HAS BECOME A BATTERY OF THIS LASER ENERGY EVER SINCE THAT MISHAP IN THE LAB!
MY THEORY IS THAT IT WORKS OFF A PRINCIPLE OF MOLECULAR BIOLOGY THAT...
IF I WANT ANY MORE CRUD OUTTA YOU, I'LL SQUEEZE YOUR HEAD!
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY AT ALL?
HOW THICK ARE YOU?! HOW RUDE DO I HAVE TO BE?!
I... I'M SORRY... I...
YOU'RE STILL TALKING?! LISTEN, FOUR-EYES, ALL I CARE ABOUT RIGHT NOW IS THAT EGG!
PERHAPS WE SHOULD STOP REFERRING TO IT AS AN "EGG." PERHAPS "ARTIFICIAL IMPLANT."
WELL IF IT'S AN IMPLANT, THEN IT'S OBVIOUSLY ARTIFICIAL! YOU'VE GOT A FIRMER HANDLE ON DOUBLE-TALK THAN MOST POLITICIANS!
WHEN WERE YOU GOING TO DROP THIS BOMBSHELL ON ME? WERE YOU GOING TO DO IT AT ALL?!
AND TO THINK I HAD BEGUN TO THINK OF IT AS MY KID... AS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE FOR US...
...WHEN ALL YOU'VE REALLY DONE IS SUCKER ME A SECOND TIME!
PLEASE, JOHNNY! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND... I LOVE YOU!
DON'T UNDERSTAND? ALL I'VE FLIPPING DONE IS "UNDERSTAND"!
I'M THROUGH BEING BURNED BY YOU, LADY.
THE FIRST TIME, SHAME ON YOU.
THE SECOND TIME, IT'S SHAME ON ME!


A MILLION LIGHT YEARS AWAY...
I MEAN, I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WOULDN'T SEND YOURS TRULY, WHAT WITH ALL THOSE INTER-GALACTIC BABES JUST ITCHIN' FOR A DREAM DATE WIT' ME...
...SO WHY IS EVERYONE'S FAVORITE EGGHEAD PERSONA NON GRATA?
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT CHOOSING REED?
"AND SO IT WAS, ON THIS PLANET EARTH, THAT MR. FANTASTIC WAS CHOSEN TO TRAVERSE INFINITY IN SEARCH OF THE ULTIMATE NULLIFIER... THE ONE WEAPON WITH WHICH TO THWART THE PLANET-KILLER.
"EARTH'S DESTINY WAS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE... ONE IN WHICH A SINGLE, PIVOTAL MISTAKE WOULD COST THE BLUE MARBLE HER VERY LIFE.
"TO HIS CREDIT, BRAVELY DID HE ACCEPT THIS SUICIDE MISSION.
"AND WITH GRIM DETERMINATION, HE DID STRETCH THROUGH THE CELESTIAL BARRIERS KNOWN AS UN-LIFE...
"...UNTIL LIGHTING UPON THE VERY DOORSTEP OF GALACTUS HIMSELF!

" EVEN THE BRILLIANT MIND OF MR. FANTASTIC WAS BAFFLED... AMAZED BY THE PLETHORA OF SCIENTIFIC MARVELS WHICH LAY STREWN ABOUT GALACTUS'S LAIR.
" AND IN THIS DISTORTION DID EARTH'S ONLY HOPE LOSE TRACK OF THE EVER-TICKING, AND TOTALLY UNFORGIVING CLOCK.
" DESPITE THE MENTAL IMAGE OF THE NULLIFIER WHICH WAS IMPLANTED IN RICHARDS'S MIND'S EYE, STILL DID HE SEEK OUT AN EVEN GREATER WEAPON.
"EACH WAR TOY WAS SCRUTINIZED, DALLIED OVER, AND TESTED.
" PERHAPS REED RICHARDS WAS EVEN SUCCESSFUL, AND DID FIND A DEVICE WHICH COULD IMPEDE THE DESTRUCTION. ALAS, WE SHALL NEVER KNOW.
" FOR IN THAT TIME...
"...THE EARTH WAS CONSUMED BY GALACTUS, RESULTING IN BILLIONS OF DEATHS.
AMAZING! THAT EXPLAINS THE BURNING IMAGE WE SAW, WARNING OF A HORRIBLE END! SOMEHOW, THAT DOPPELGANGER CAME FROM THIS WORLD!*
THIS SEEMS A LITTLE FAR-FETCHED, SUZIE...
...NOT TO MENTION WAY TOO CONVENIENT!
BALDY HERE'S JUST BLAMING A DEAD GUY FOR STUFF HE MESSED UP HIMSELF!

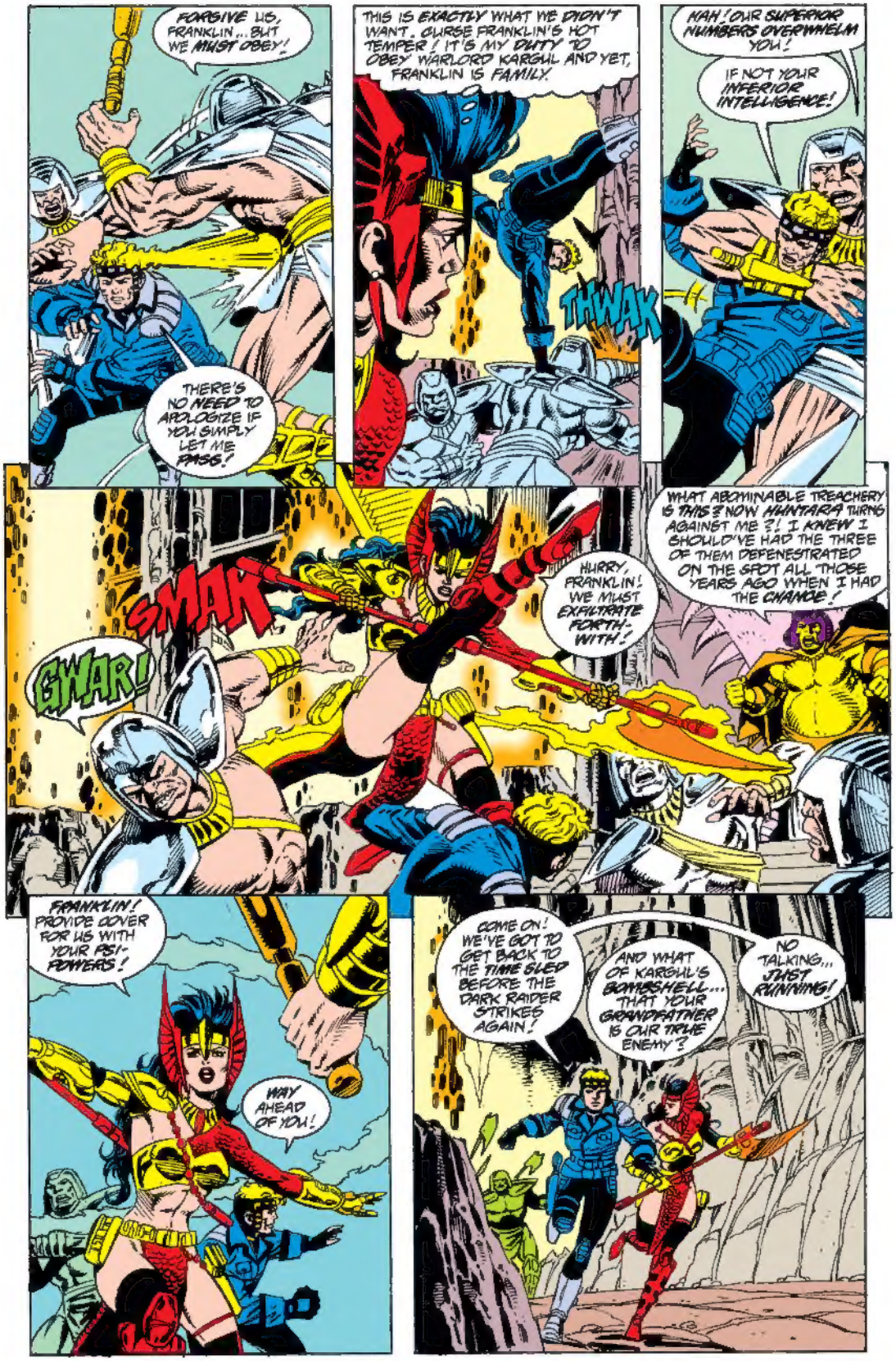
* FF #387.—THE R-MAN

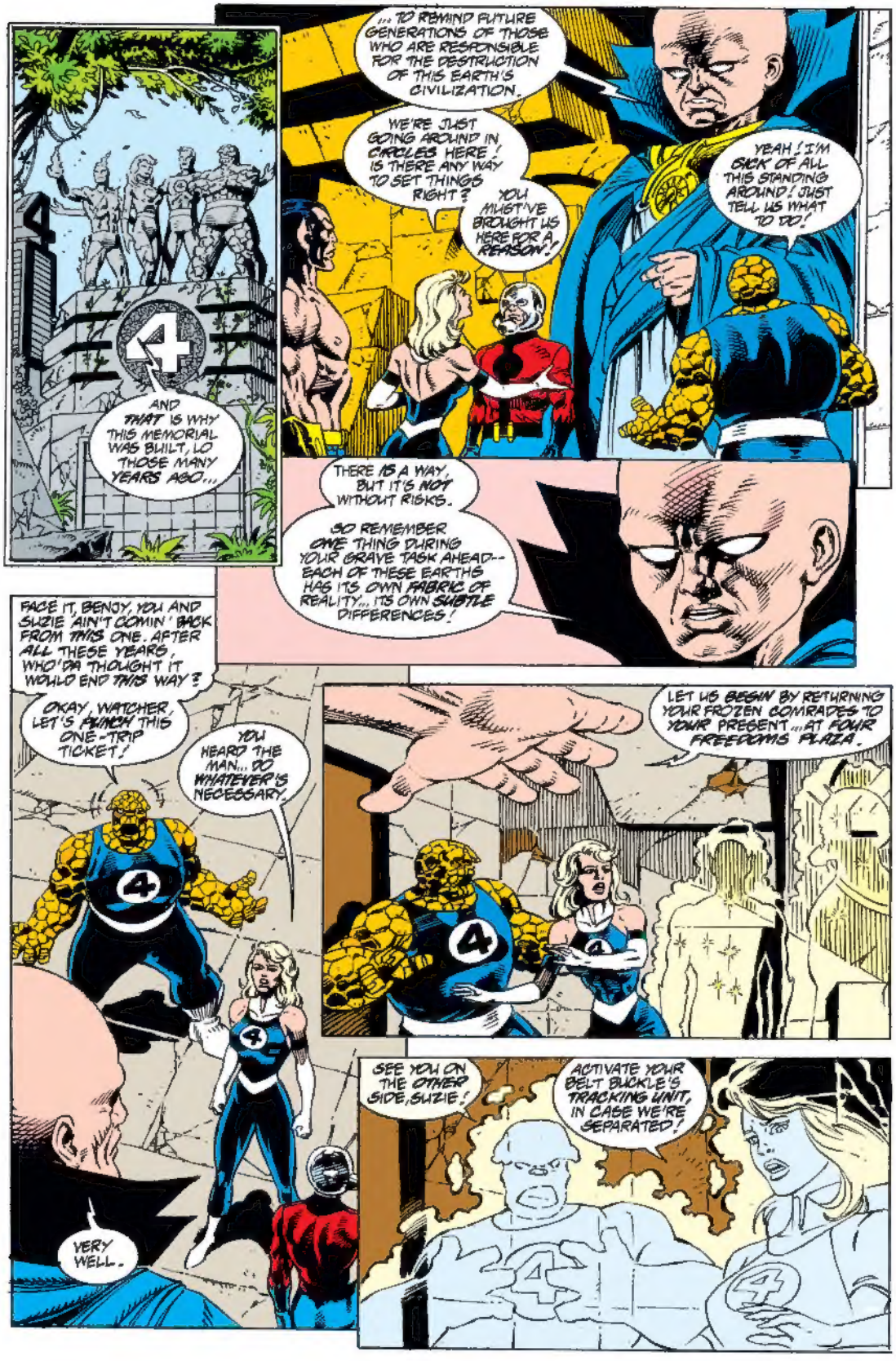

IN FACT, I AIN'T SEEN THIS GUY DO NUTHIN' TO PROVE THAT HE REALLY IS THE WATCHER... OTHER THAN BEIN' A BIG WHINER!
OF COURSE IT'S HATH, BEN! HOW ELSE COULD HE KNOW OF EVENTS UNFOLDING ON SO MANY ALTERNATE EARTHS?
IT'S CALLED SPINNING A YARN, SUZIE.
I ONLY WISH THESE STORIES WERE FABRICATIONS, MR. GRIMM.
BUT THEY ARE TRUE. WHILE RICHARDS DALLIED, GALACTUS ACTIVATED HIS ELEMENTAL CONVERTER...
...AND FED.
"IT WAS NOT THE FIRST CULTURE TO FALL BEFORE GALACTUS. IT WILL NOT BE THE LAST.
"I COULD ONLY WATCH AS THE OCEANS BOILED... AND GREAT FISSURES SPLIT OPEN THE EARTH'S CRUST.
"TO WITNESS SUCH VIOLENCE IS NOT AN EASY THING, BUT THE IMAGES THEMSELVES ARE SOON FORGOTTEN...
"PASSED OVER, IN FAVOR OF THE FAR MORE HAUNTING SOUNDS OF A BILLION VOICES CRYING OUT IN HORROR.
FANTASTIC 4 THE MOVIE
RIGHT, BALDY. AND THAT'S HOW WE WOUND UP ON THE PLANET OF THE APES?!
ALAS, MR. GRIMM, THE MOST FEARFUL SECRET HAS YET TO BE REVEALED!

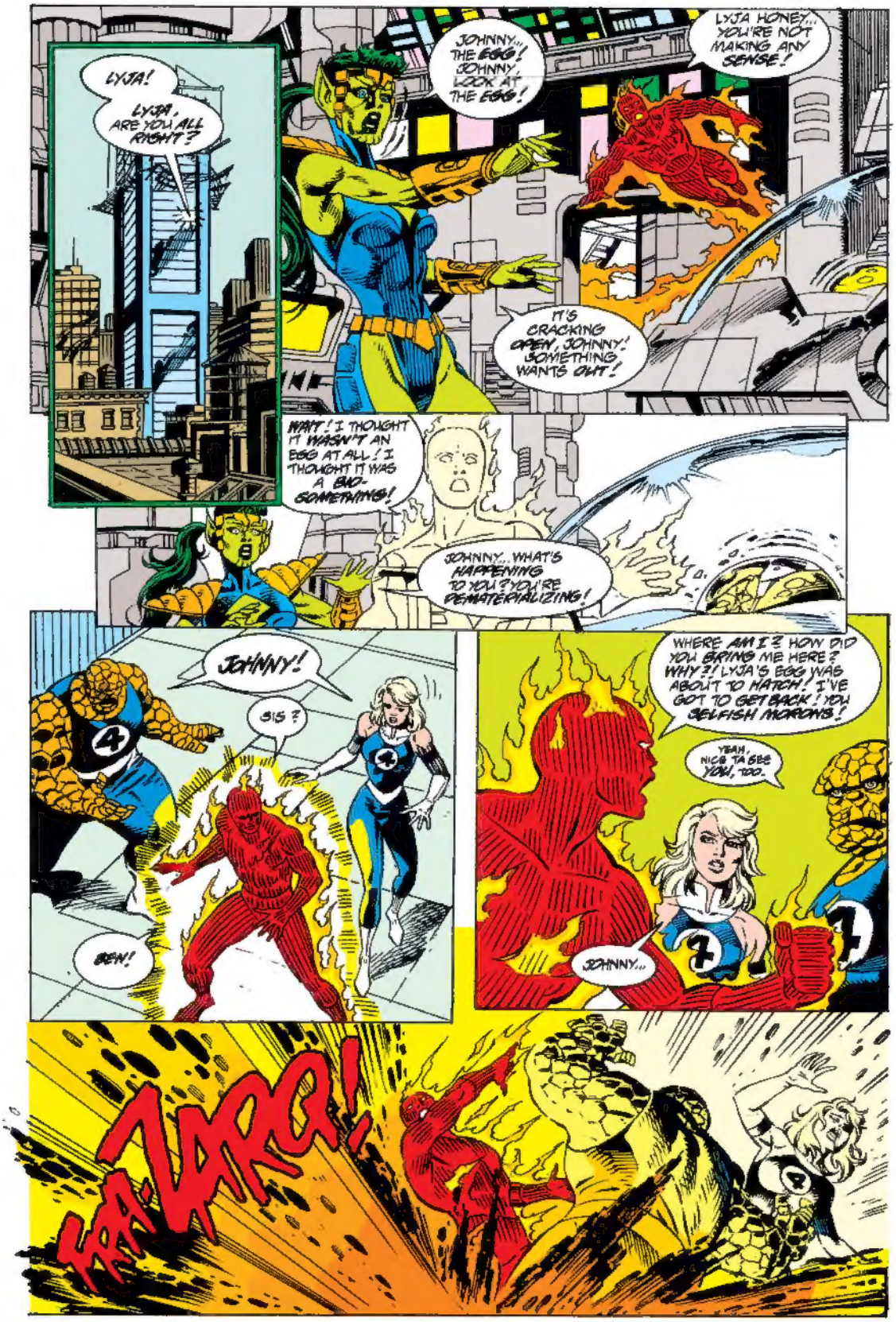

TODAY.
SHRAKK
I HATE HER!
FOR WHAT SHE'S DONE TO OUR HOME... OUR FAMILY... OUR HEARTS!
SHE HAD NO RIGHT TO DO THAT... NO RIGHT!
BEEP BEEP BEEP
INCOMING MESSAGE FROM WAKANDAN FREQUENCY...
WHAT IS THIS... SOME DYSFUNCTIONAL COFFEE KLATCH?!
GREETINGS, JOHNNY! TIS I, T'CHALLA, RULER OF WAKANDA, ALLY TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AND BLACK PANTHER!
I MERELY WISHED TO CHECK ON MY AMERICAN FRIENDS, SINCE IT'S BEEN SOME TIME SINCE WE LAST SPOKE. I HOPE YOUR REPAIRS ARE PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE?
PLEASE CONSIDER THAT MY GIFT. IT WILL EASE YOUR TROUBLED SOUL.
IN FACT, PERHAPS YOU COULD RETURN THE FAVOR. I NEED A BIT OF A HELPING HAND, AND I THOUGHT...
OH SO YOU WANNA RUB THAT IN OUR FACES? WE NEEDED THE MONEY... SHE WOULDN'T HAVE ASKED IF...!
YOU THOUGHT WRONG!
WE'VE GOT OUR OWN PROBLEMS... GO CALL THE AVENGERS, OR SOMEBODY WHO ACTUALLY CARES!
HE DIS-CONNECTED US!
THOSE AMERICANS HAVE THE MOST LETHARGIC SENSE OF ETIQUETTE, MY KING.
PERHAPS A ROBUST CANING?
BLIP

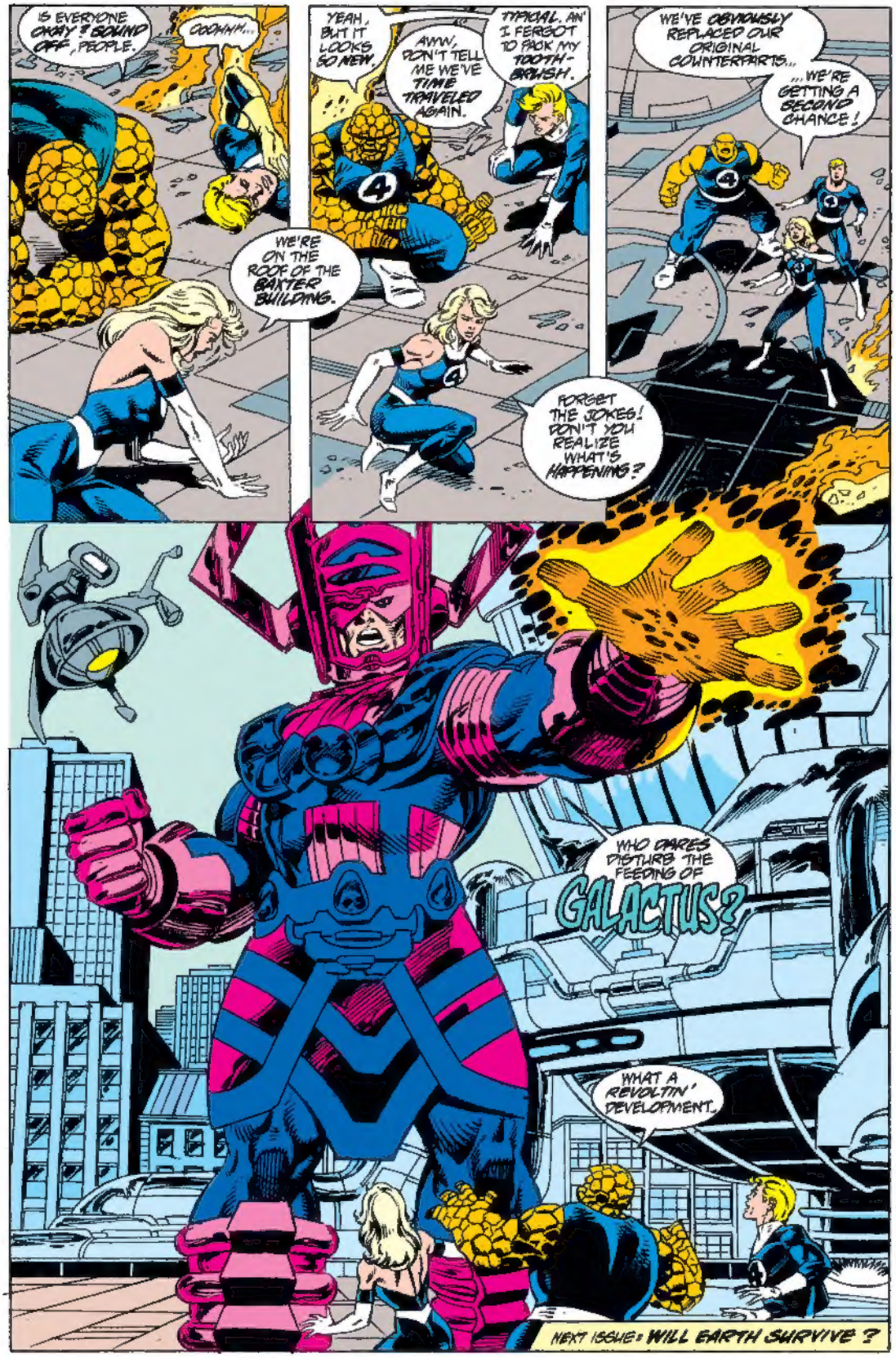
I COULD ARRANGE SEVERAL...
NO, LOYAL ONE. THE FANTASTIC FOUR HAVE BEEN UNDER A TERRIFIC STRAIN LATELY.
AND, DESPITE THE TORCH'S AMAZING POWERS AND COLORFUL ADVENTURES...
...HE IS STILL BUT A YOUNG MAN.
THEN IT IS FORGOTTEN, MILORD. STILL, I AM CONCERNED FOR VIBRAXAS, THE YOUTH WHO RECENTLY GAINED AMAZING SUPER POWERS.
IF THE FANTASTIC FOUR CANNOT PERFORM THE PROPER DIAGNOSTIC CHECKS ON HIM, WHO WILL?
SUCH POWER IN ONE SO YOUNG IS EASILY CORRUPTED. I FEAR...
AS LEADER OF WAKANDA, I HAVE MANY RESOURCES AT MY DISPOSAL.
YOUNG VIBRAXAS IS A POTENTIAL BOON TO OUR SMALL NATION. A POWER SUCH AS HIS COULD BE USED FOR GREAT GOOD.
AND IF THE FANTASTIC FOUR CAN'T HELP US, WE SHALL BE FORCED TO MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.
GEEZ. I FEEL LIKE A CLASS-A HEEL FOR THE WAY I'VE BEEN ACTING. BUT IT SEEMS THAT REGARDLESS OF HELPING EVERY JOE WHO COMES DOWN THE PIKE, THE TEAM'S BAD LUCK JUST KEEPS COMING IN WAVES.
I SHOULD REALLY CALL T'CHALLA BACK AND SEE WHAT HE...
AAIIEEE!
THAT SCREAM... LYJA!

CASTLE KARGUL.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
HOW DARE YOU ALLOW ACCESS TO THE TIME-STREAMS TO THE DARK RAIDER... ENABLING HIM TO COMMIT MURDER?!
ALTHOUGH WE'RE NOT PRIVY TO YOUR COURT'S MACHINATIONS, WE DO STAND BEFORE YOU SOMEWHAT OUTRAGED, MILORD.
YOU'RE OUTRAGED?! IF YOU TWO WERE NOT AS THE FRUIT OF MY OWN LOINS, I WOULD FLAY YOU WHERE YOU STAND FOR SUCH AFFRONTERY!
DARK RAIDER IS MERELY A MURDERER. NATHANIEL RICHARDS IS THE TRUE THREAT...
...HE IS THE ONE MANIPULATING THE TIMESTREAMS, TO SAVE A PLANET... AN ENTIRE TIMESTREAM... THAT THE FATES HAVE ALREADY ABANDONED!
THEN I'LL DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP! I'LL STOP THE DARK RAIDER USING ANY MEANS NECESSARY!
FRANKLIN... MIND YOUR TONE! KARGUL WON'T STAND FOR...
GUARDS! SUBDUE THIS CONTEMPTUOUS WHELP AT ONCE! TO THEIR AID, HUNTARA!
FRANKLIN! THERE IS STILL TIME TO STOP THIS MADNESS!
WARLORD KARGUL, OVER THE YEARS YOU'VE TAUGHT ME MANY THINGS. AMONG THEM...
DON'T BACK DOWN FROM ANYONE!
THWOK
LET HIM COOL HIS BOILING BLOOD IN THE DANK RECESSES OF THE CASTLE'S DUNGEON!


FORGIVE US, FRANKLIN... BUT WE MUST OBEY!
THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE IF YOU SIMPLY LET ME PASS!
THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT WE DIDN'T WANT. CURSE FRANKLIN'S HOT TEMPER! IT'S MY DUTY TO OBEY WARLORD KARGUL AND YET, FRANKLIN IS FAMILY.
THWAK
HAH! OUR SUPERIOR NUMBERS OVERWHELM YOU!
IF NOT YOUR INFERIOR INTELLIGENCE!
SMAK
GWAK!
HURRY, FRANKLIN! WE MUST EXFILTRATE FORTH-WITH!
WHAT ABOMINABLE TREACHERY IS THIS? NOW ALANTARA TURNS AGAINST ME?! I KNEW I SHOULD'VE HAD THE THREE OF THEM DEFENESTRATED ON THE SPOT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO WHEN I HAD THE CHANCE!
FRANKLIN! PROVIDE COVER FOR US WITH YOUR PSI-POWERS!
WAY AHEAD OF YOU!
COME ON! WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO THE TIME SLED BEFORE THE DARK RAIDER STRIKES AGAIN!
AND WHAT OF KARGUL'S BOMBSHELL... THAT YOUR GRANDFATHER IS OUR TRUE ENEMY?
NO TALKING... JUST RUNNING!


AND THAT IS WHY THIS MEMORIAL WAS BUILT, LO THOSE MANY YEARS AGO...
...TO REMIND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF THOSE WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THIS EARTH'S CIVILIZATION.
WE'RE JUST GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES HERE! IS THERE ANY WAY TO SET THINGS RIGHT?
YOU MUST'VE BROUGHT US HERE FOR A REASON!
YEAH! I'M SICK OF ALL THIS STANDING AROUND! JUST TELL US WHAT TO DO!
THERE IS A WAY, BUT IT'S NOT WITHOUT RISKS.
SO REMEMBER ONE THING DURING YOUR BRAVE TASK AHEAD-- EACH OF THESE EARTHS HAS ITS OWN FABRIC OF REALITY... ITS OWN SUBTLE DIFFERENCES!
FACE IT, BENJY, YOU AND SUZIE AIN'T COMIN' BACK FROM THIS ONE. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, WHO'DA THOUGHT IT WOULD END THIS WAY?
OKAY, WATCHER, LET'S PUNCH THIS ONE-TRIP TICKET!
YOU HEARD THE MAN... DO WHATEVER'S NECESSARY.
VERY WELL.
LET US BEGIN BY RETURNING YOUR FROZEN COMRADES TO YOUR PRESENT... AT FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA.
SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE, SUZIE!
ACTIVATE YOUR BELT BUCKLE'S TRACKING UNIT, IN CASE WE'RE SEPARATED!


LYJA!
LYJA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
JOHNNY... THE EGG! JOHNNY, LOOK AT THE EGG!
LYJA HONEY... YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!
IT'S CRACKING OPEN, JOHNNY! SOMETHING WANTS OUT!
WAIT! I THOUGHT IT WASN'T AN EGG AT ALL! I THOUGHT IT WAS A BIO-SOMETHING!
JOHNNY... WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU? YOU'RE DEMATERIALIZING!
JOHNNY!
SIS?
BEN!
WHERE AM I? HOW DID YOU BRING ME HERE? WHY? LYJA'S EGG WAS ABOUT TO HATCH! I'VE GOT TO GET BACK! YOU SELFISH MORONS!
YEAH, NICE TA SEE YOU, TOO.
JOHNNY...
FRA-ZARG!


IS EVERYONE OKAY? SOUND OFF, PEOPLE.
OOOHHH...
WE'RE ON THE ROOF OF THE BAXTER BUILDING.
YEAH, BUT IT LOOKS SO NEW.
AWW, DON'T TELL ME WE'VE TIME TRAVELED AGAIN.
TYPICAL. AIN' I FERGOT TO PACK MY TOOTH-BRUSH.
FORGET THE JOKES! DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING?
WE'VE OBVIOUSLY REPLACED OUR ORIGINAL COUNTERPARTS...
...WE'RE GETTING A SECOND CHANCE!
WHO DARES DISTURB THE FEEDING OF GALACTUS?
WHAT A REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENT.
NEXT ISSUE: WILL EARTH SURVIVE?